THE OBSERVATOR.

In Account of Greenwich-*Hoſpital. Its Foundation. The Delay of its Building. The Extravagance thereof. The Advantage and Profit of its Officers. The Differences betwixt that Building and others, in Reſpect to the Price. The Hardſhip of the Poor Sailors by being kept out of their Hoſpital.*

From Wednesday January the 13th, to Saturday January the 16th, 170$\frac{2}{3}$.

Country-m. MAſter *Obſervator*, you did thoſe poor Sick and Wounded Sailors a ſingular Service, in Repreſenting their Caſe to the Perſons in *Power* to *Relieve them.* But 'tis a great wonder to me, our Parliaments have taken no care in that Reſpect. If the poor Fellows had an Hoſpital allow'd them, as the Land Soldiers have at *Chelſea*, they would not thus, at every turn, be expoſed to ſuch *Hardſhips*. I remember you were once mentioning the Royal Hoſpital at *Greenwich*, deſigned for that purpoſe? Pray let us know the *Conſtitution* of that Hoſpital, and the Reaſons why Sailors have no *Benefit* of it, when ſo many thouſands of Pounds have been Levied upon the Subject, and apply'd to that uſe?

Obſ. It would ſeem Bold for a Man to meddle with a Conſtitution Eſtabliſhed by Act of Parliament, and the Miſmanagements thereof, which have ſo often been under the conſideration of the Houſe of Commons. But ſince it is ſtill a *Publick Grievance*, and not one Sailor in *England* one penny the better for that Hoſpital, it cannot be ill taken (I am ſure by true *Engliſhmen*) if we Repreſent the *Diſtreſſed Caſe* of the Sailors in this Reſpect.

The late War ſhow'd us the *Neceſſity* of ſuch a Building for the uſe of our poor Maimed Seamen; and Mr. *James Waſe*, the Chyrurgeon, Superviſor of the Sick and Wounded Seamen in the Ports of *Rocheſter*, *Chatham*, and parts adjacent, propoſing *Greenwich* Houſe as a place proper for ſuch an Hoſpital, Her late Majeſty, our *Mary* of pious Memory, was ſoon prevail'd upon to give a Grant of the ſaid Houſe, for the Ends and Purpoſes aforementioned; which Grant was ſoon after Confirmed by Act of Parliament, and Money was Appropriated for that uſe. But ſuch is the *Corruption* of this *Degenerate Age*, that all Deſigns for *Publick Good*, are converted to *Private Intereſt*. And this Hoſpital, which as yet, has not Succoured one of our Seamen, has been a vaſt Advantage to the Parties concerned in the Building. The *State* and *Miſmanagements* of this Building was the laſt Seſſion of Parliament enquired into by a Committee of the Houſe of Commons, at which Committee I conſtantly attended, and heard the Examinations, and upon the whole it appeared to me that the Building was carried on for the Sole Advantage of *H——more*, and a crooked Diſciple, one *Vanb——gh*, who it appeared had a Fellow feeling in every thing, and in every Body concerned in that Hoſpital. They have Built, at leaſt almoſt finiſhed, a great Hall, with good Apartments for themſelves, but not Wards enough to entertain 100 Seamen. They make *Pauls* work of it, and 'tis cut out to be longer in Building than *Noahs* Ark.

The firſt time King *William*, of eve Glorious Memory, Dined at *Greenwich*, after the Grant of the Queens Houſe, he ſaid before the Officers belonging to that Fabrick, *That if they had Built only a Pile in likeneſs to that of King* Charles *the* 2*d's Houſe there, and the reſt of Brick, the Commiſſioners might have ſaved above a Hundred Thouſand Pounds*, and I believe His Majeſty ſeeing how unlikely that Hoſpital was to be an Advantage to the Seamen, occaſioned him to ſtop the 2000*l. per Ann.* which he allowed towards that Building, which Sum was ſtopt for four years before his Death.

Country-m. Here is a Printed Paper, containing a *Juſtification* of the proceedings of the Parties concerned in Building that Fabrick. I ſuppoſe it comes from the Perſons accuſed at the Committee you juſt now mentioned. Pray your Opinion of it?

Obſ. The Author of this Paper calls himſelf *Wee*, intimating as if it had come from a Committee of *Greenwich* Hoſpital; tho' 'tis well known he is a Party concern'd. There is no Officer there can Speak in the *Plural Number*, except *Vanb——gh*, who for ought I know may have *Piggs* both in his Belly and Back, and he that has made Committees all along for the Hoſpital even as he pleaſed, may well Speak in the Stile of a Committee, nay, in the Name of the whole Commiſſioners. But whoever it be, ———He gives us indeed a large Encomium on the Building, and tells us, *It is according to Architectonical Symmetry, and is Laſting, Beautiful and Convenient.* Which if true, the Praiſe of it belongs to a greater Architect than Himſelf, who would aſſume the Praiſe of the Workmanſhip. He much commends the extraordinary Expedition in carrying on the Work, and Speaks particularly of the *Terrace-Wall*, but ſays nothing of the Dammage it has already ſuſtained, and is likely to Suſtain, thro' Unskillful Directions; if not prevented by taking off the *Parapet* and *Toras*, ſetting them more backwards.

Country-m. This would make a Saint Swear! Here are *Terrace-Walks*, fine *Halls* and Apartments. What's all this to the poor Sailors, when their Sick and Wounded Dye in the ſtreets for want of a Houſe to cover them? 'Tis e'en as you ſay; this Fabrick muſt ſerve for my Lord *Humps* Palace, when he arrives to the Honour of others of the Family of the *Vans*.

Obſ. He's much out of the way when he ſays the Brickwork amounts to but 5*l.* 1*s.* 0*d.* a Rod. I have with all the Caution and Juſtice

that

that may be, computed the Charge of Brick-Work at *Greenwich-Hospital*, as follows, 4300 of Bricks, 200 of Lime, 2 Load of sand, will make one Rod of Brickwork, which with the Servants Wages to look after these materials, besides waste, amounts to

	l.	*s.*	*p.*
	4	9	6
Workmanship *per* Rod	1	5	0
In all *per* Rod	5	14	6

Where Stock-Bricks are used 3300 of Bricks, 1000 of Stock Bricks, Lime, Sand, *&c.* amounts *per* Rod to

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
	5	6	6
Workmanship *per* Rod	1	6	0
In all *per* Rod	6	6	6

The Hospital may be Built with the same sort of Brick as now, and the Workmanship the same in all its parts.

He compares Rustick *Asblor* and *Plinth*, with that of *Pauls-School*; in answer to which it may be said, when that School was Built, stone was 25 *s. per* Ton more than now it is; and Journey-mens Wags 4 *s.* more *per* Week, than now they Work for; which considered, they have not been so very saving in the Hospital as they pretend.

The Columns at the *Exchange*, and that to be at *Greenwich*, cannot be fairly compar'd, not only for the Reason aforesaid, but the Expedition the Citizens required in its Rebuilding, and the scarcity of able Workman at that time. If he had compared every particular Article of the *Masons* Work with the Prices allowed in other Publick Buildings, as St. *Pauls*, St. *Brides*, &c. the World would soon see how careful he has been of the Publick Money.

The Carpenter has complain'd of his Ill-Usage, and hard prizes, and afterwards deny'd it; However, he shew'd his Judgement, for when he Contracted with the Commissioners, he took it 25 *per Cent* cheaper than any other Workmen would do it, and Goods were 30 *per Cent* dearer than when he complain'd.

I don't deny but Workmen have been to view the Fabrick and the Works, and have given Judgement on his side; but He never told them the Smiths Work in Tying the Roof of the Hall, came to 400 *l.* nor that he had a House and Yard of the Hospital Rent-Free.

Country-m. By your Discourse I perceive these good People find out the most chargeable Buildings about Town to justifie their own Extravagant Expence; but private and not publick Buildings should be had under consideration, when we examine into the Rates for Building such a Fabrick as that of *Greenwich* Hospital; private Persons take more care how they contract, and how they spend their Money; tho' I must confess the same Conscience ought to be had to the publick as to our private Affairs.

Obs. Prithee these *People* find out the dearest ways of managing the publick Affair, the Plummers Company offered the Commissioners for *Greenwich* Hospital to serve them with Lead at 12 *s. per Hundred weight*, the [illegible] price; and as their *Charity* to the poor [illegible] lors to give them the Workmanship and [illegible] Soder, but were refused, and a Mill'd-Lead Man of *Vanb*——*ghs* picking up was contracted with at 17*s.*---6*d. per Hundred* weight as I remember was said by the Master and [illegible] thers of the Plummers Company at that time before the *Commissioners*. Indeed they endeavoured (I mean the Gentlemen that [illegible] Estates by the Hospital) to insinuate to the *Commissioners*, that the Mill'd Lead was the cheapest, but the *Commissioners* were so sensible to the contrary, that the *Chair-man* thereof returned the thanks of the *Commissioners* to the Plummers Company for their Charitable Offer. Now Sir, I will give you a Calculate of Lead cast, and mill'd Lead, as to the Inequality of the prices, and then leave you to Judge whether the Offer of the Plummers *Company* ought to have been refused.

Mill'd Lead without Seams turned up, and 8 pound to the Foot, 7 *b.* -- 1 *q.* -- 2 *l.* will lay one Square at 17*s. per Cent*--6*l.*--3*s.*--10*d.*--½.

Plummers Lead allowing 1*b.* --- 3*q.* --- 4*l.* more than Mill'd Lead, which is 10 pound to the Foot 9*b.* -- 0*q.* -- 6*l.* will lay one Square, which at 12*s. per Cent.*——5*l.*---8*s.*---8*d.*¼.

Plummers cheaper in every square than Mill'd Lead.——————00*l.*--- 15*s.* ---2*d.* ¼.

And thus Sir, have I given you a succinct Account of the Management of *Greenwich* Hospital to the time of that Committee, which never reported their Examinations, or the Abuses complain'd of to them; but e'en set the poor Sailors once more a drift with their Broken Bones, and Wounded Bodies, till such time as our Gracious and Good Queen shall commiserate their Unhappy State.

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